

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 14, 20, 24, 28 and 33 are amended; claims 7-13, 23, 27 and 32 have been canceled. Claims 1-6, 16-17, 21-22, 25-26, 29-31 were previously canceled. Claims 14-15, 18, 20, 24, 28, and 33 are pending upon entry of the Amendment. No new matter is introduced by way of the Amendment. Reconsideration of the claims in view of the amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

The objection to claim 32 is rendered moot by the cancellation thereof.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claims 7-15, 18, 20, 23-24, 27-28, 32-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sekiguchi (U.S. 7,143,045), hereinafter "Sekiguchi" in view of Takagi (U.S. 6,980,956), hereinafter "Takagi". These rejections are respectfully traversed in light of the instant amendments.

Independent claims 14, 24, 28, and 33, as amended, call for, *inter alia*, a device control device that can delete transition definition data indicating a transition from one process item that has been defined to another process item, and can add new transition definition data indicating a transition from one undefined process item to another undefined process item.

In some exemplary embodiments, a device control device such as that described in paragraph [0082] of the application as published (U.S. Publication No. 2008/0228492) deletes transition definition data where the product of the score S and the weighting factor J do not reach a predetermined value. Moreover, a device control device such as that described in paragraph [0085] of the specification can count the number of transitions (jumps) from one process item to another process item that have not been defined as transition definition data, and automatically add new transition definition data indicating this transition when this number reaches a predetermined number.

Typically, word or action patterns tend to differ according to the user. Consequently, simply uniformly defining transition definition data may not allow for the demands of a user to be properly surmised. However, by deleting transition definition data based on a product of the score S and the weighting factor J and adding transition definition data based on the number of transitions, the process can be properly controlled based on the environment in which a device control device is used or the habits of a user and the like.

Both Sekiguchi and Takagi fail to disclose or suggest anything whatsoever with regard to a structure in which transition definition data based on a product of the score S and the weighting factor J is deleted and transition definition data based on the number of transitions is added. Therefore, the hypothetical combination of Sekiguchi and Takagi does not disclose or suggest

said device changes said weighting factor in accordance with a link to said input information and generates a flowchart of process items by deleting said transition definition data thus defined when a product of said weighting factor thus changed and said likelihood do not reach a predetermined value and adding new transition definition data indicating said transition when the number of transitions from one undefined process to another undefined process item reaches a predetermined number,

as is called for by independent claim 14, as amended. Independent claims 24, 28 and 33 include similar features and are thus also considered patentable over the cited references. Dependent claims 15, 18, and 20 are considered patentable at least due to their dependence on patentable claim 14. Withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of all pending claims is thus respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

Further, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment in connection with this paper to Deposit Account No. 20-1430.

Appl. No. 10/581,434
Amdt. dated May 2, 2011
Reply to Office Action of January 25, 2011

PATENT

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 415-576-0200.

Respectfully submitted,



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